

A network interface configures a plurality of physical layer devices and a corresponding plurality of network interface devices to allow for the communication of network data between the physical layer devices and corresponding link partners. At least one of the network interface devices is configured as a master device that communicates management information and autonegotiation results with the physical layer devices, while the other network interface devices do not. A configuration source, such as a central processing unit (CPU) or electronic erasable programmable read only memory (EEPROM), receives the autonegotiation results from the physical layer devices, through the master device, and configures the media access controllers (MACs) of each of the network interface devices in accordance with the autonegotiation results. This forces the MACs into their respective proper configurations even though the network interface devices that are not master devices do not receive the autonegotiation results directly from their corresponding physical layer devices.

[illegible]